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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000736

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: TSVANGIRAI SPEAKS OUT, CONFRONTS MUGABE

Classified By: CDA Donald Petterson for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Facing strong criticism from his party for being too conciliatory, Prime Minister and MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai delivered a hard-hitting speech, directed at ZANU-PF, at the MDC's 10th anniversary celebration on September 13 in Bulawayo. Two days later, in a short and tense meeting with President Robert Mugabe, Tsvangirai challenged Mugabe on his failure to comply with the Global Political Agreement (GPA). Meanwhile, ZANU-PF has raised the level of rhetoric against the MDC by alleging that it is establishing a donor-funded parallel government and that it is colluding with the West on the issue of sanctions. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Tsvangirai met last week with the MDC national council, the executive committee (comprised of about 20 top officials), and the standing committee (comprised of about 10 top advisers) and heard the same message: Despite having won the election, he was failing to exercise strong leadership and was acting too conciliatory toward Mugabe. (NOTE: Privately, we have heard the same observations from ZANU-PF reformers and MDC-M officials. END NOTE.) They urged him to be more assertive, particularly with respect to the GPA. In its meeting, the national council resolved to consult the MDC rank and file on the "sustainability and worthiness" of the GPA.

13. (U) Apparently in response, Tsvangirai delivered a hard-hitting speech in Bulawayo on September 13 in celebration of the MDC's 10th anniversary. He told an estimated 35,000 people, inter alia: "For the past seven months we in the MDC have shown respect, conciliation and understanding to ZANU-PF and what have we got in return? Nothing. They continue to act with arrogance, forgetting that it was they who lost the March election and that they are only in this agreement as we formed this government for the well-being of the people of Zimbabwe. They continue to violate the law, persecute our people, spread the language of

hate, invade productive farms, ignore our international treaties and continue to loot our national resources. This must stop now..."

14. (C) On September 14, according to several MDC sources, Tsvangirai had his weekly one-on-one meeting with Mugabe. In the tense, 15-minute meeting, Tsvangirai confronted Mugabe with his failure to comply with the GPA, told him that future meetings between the two would serve no purpose if they did not result in progress, and indicated the MDC would review its place in government. Taken aback, Mugabe requested another meeting with Tsvangirai at which he promised to review the names for the Media Commission. (NOTE: Parliament has furnished a list of names to Mugabe for appointment to the Media Commission which is the body that will be responsible for licensing newspapers and accrediting journalists. Mugabe has been sitting on the list. END NOTE.) This meeting is now scheduled for September 17. QNOTE.) This meeting is now scheduled for September 17.

15. (C) In the past week, ZANU-PF, through ZANU-PF-controlled media, has raised the level of rhetoric against the MDC. Led by former Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo (who has reapplied for ZANU-PF membership after leaving the party in 2005 and becoming a ZANU-PF critic), ZANU-PF has alleged that the MDC, with funding from the World Bank and donors, is paying large salaries to individuals within the Office of the Prime Minister to form a "parallel government." ZANU-PF has also focused on the issue of sanctions. It has asserted, as it has long done, that sanctions are responsible for Zimbabwe's economic predicament, and has gone on to castigate

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the MDC for not moving to remove them. The lead headline in "The Herald" of September 15 read: "MDC-T wants sanctions to stay."

COMMENT

16. (C) Tsvangirai's strategy -- until now -- was to get along with Mugabe, hope for incremental progress on political issues, and build the MDC in anticipation of future elections which he was confident of winning. During his June tour of the U.S. and Europe, and in more recent conversations, he focused on the positive accomplishments of the GPA and minimized ZANU-PF intransigence. A restive party, however, has forced him to change course. His remarks in Bulawayo -- his strongest public remarks since the inception of the GPA -- and his confrontation with Mugabe indicate a new approach. How Mugabe reacts is unclear; Tsvangirai's advisers expect some progress, perhaps appointment of governors (which Mugabe had agreed to, before backing away), but this will continue to be a hard slog.

17. (C) ZANU-PF's heightened rhetoric appears to be an effort to counter the MDC's valid claim that Mugabe has failed to comply with the GPA. This underscores the importance of a more open media environment to expose Jonathan Moyo and the ZANU-PF propaganda machine. END COMMENT.

PETTERSON